

J2024-0002 Morrill transcript

Jenner Archive transcription 20-4-002 by Carol Sklenicka
Emma Morrill, March 14, 1979

Next interview with Jane DeCarly says that Mrs. Morrill was John Rule's secretary

As recording opens, Elinor arrives at Mrs. Morrill's in town and it seems she's interrupting her dinner.

Morrill says she lived in Duncans Mills. They bought a ranch near Duncans Mills -- her sister-in-law was Sadie Morrill.

She was born up at Fort Ross in 1893. Left there in 1912? Or when she was 12. Had three brothers and two sisters. One sister married very young in 1912, still lives in Duncans Mills.

Violet Palmer -- the Palmers have been there a long time at a ranch there--Guido's, Markham's, Louis Pedotti.

It was all dairy. In the 1880s it was the richest dairy area in California.

My father had the dairy at Fort Ross, adjoining the Call Ranch. 100-150 cows. All men worked in the dairy, foreigners. Swiss and Italian people came from Europe. They lived in a bunkhouse there year-round.

After they moved to Duncans Mills, they sold the cows and got into the sheep business.

We used to walk about two miles to the Fort Ross School. Mary Call Charles, mother of Barbara Charles who married George Black, taught there. Later Emma Call taught there. Only five children there, started walking at age five. We all graduated there from the Call family. I can remember every little turn in the road. Too bad they took over that coast, cut up all the ranches. All that frontage was taken over.... [unclear whether she's objecting to public land or to private development.]

I knew Charlie Rule. We used to go up there hunting for deer. Regular deer hunts with horse and dogs. You went out on horseback and the dogs would run the deer out.

Elinor shows her a picture of the Rule Ranch a couple of years ago. She doesn't recognize it. Then she shows her a drawing that Elizabeth Rule (Charlie's mother) made from an old Atlas. [What Atlas? Where is this?] His sister was Mrs. Parton / Carton?

They had many parties and dinners at the Charlie Rule's house.

The lower dairy was near Russian Gulch. The upper dairy was up at the home place. (Elinor says Russian Gulch is Sheephouse but that sounds wrong)

Charlie Rule was wonderful to us. He always had cattle. Purebred Herefords. He rented the rest

of it to the dairymen. He sent cattle to Hawaii. There's a history about him. He sent them to fairs in Sacramento and Los Angeles. We went there by train or in old cars.

Did Charlie Rule ever sell horses? This fellow that sold part of the ranch toward Jenner, not Willig, he sold a few horses but it was not a big business.

Rule Ranch had a foreman who took care of the gardens. They grew a lot of food.

Elinor: in John Rule's diary there's something about allowing Charles Jenner to build a cabin in Jenner. This comes from Louise Cuthill's diary. She was very crippled. She taught school there for 40 years.

My husband's sister Mamie Morrill Bidwell was the first teacher at Jenner, just taught there for one year. She lived on the Rule Ranch in the main house with her sister. Used to ride horseback down to the school. They were building the mill at Jenner then. [This name is listed in Fort Ross history section, where Morrill family Bible is also described: <https://www.fortross.org/ranch-era.htm>]

Emma says she has more information, "can get all the dates you want." [So did she ever?]

Where the store and restaurant were, that's where the mill was. And the little houses going up the hill. The Chester Kings lived up the hill by the big rock, a big house right there [on Balboa?]

Elinor asks, is that where sister-in-law to Carlos lives now? Carlos?

The rainwater, he had drains off the roof and barrels.